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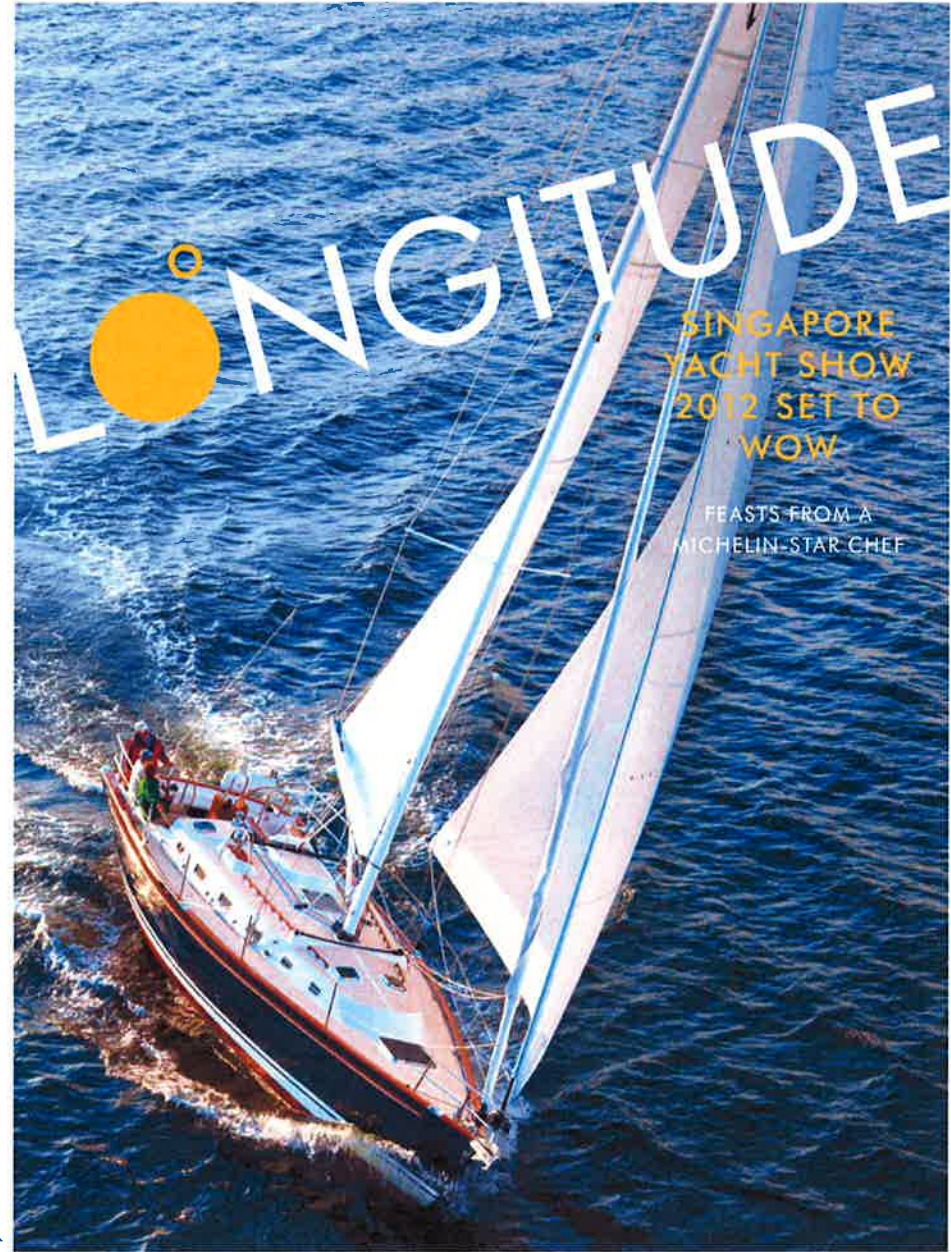
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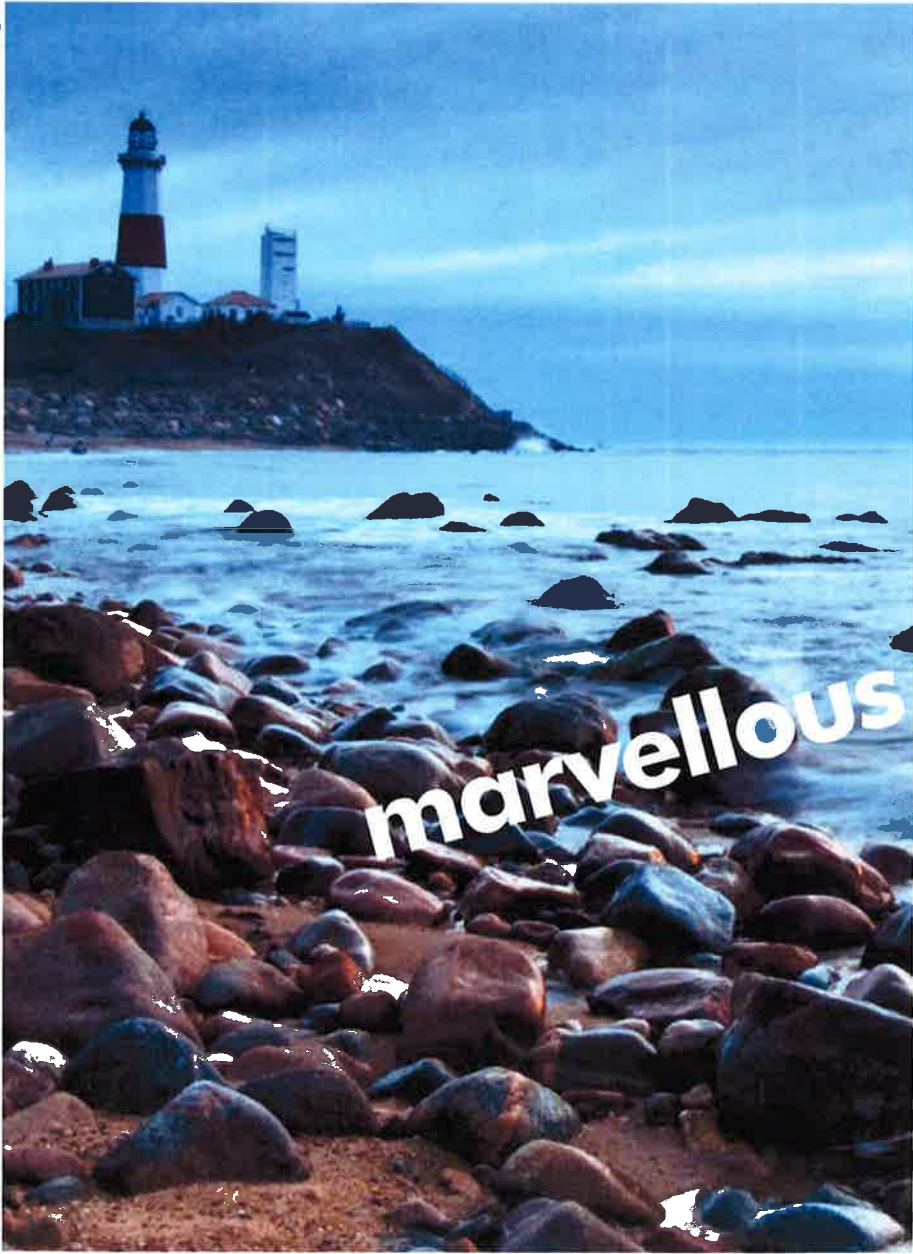
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MAR/APR 2012 ○ PROFILE SEA CHANGE ○ VOYAGE MARVELLOUS MANHASSET ○ GOURMET EAT, PLAY, LOVE FOOD





manhasset

Better known for being the backdrop of F. Scott Fitzgerald's famed novel *The Great Gatsby*, Manhasset Bay is actually a worthy tourist destination in its own right. By Julie Schwieter

Take a leisurely stroll along the beach on Long Island, New York
FACING PAGE: Montauk Point Light, a lighthouse on Long Island.



It's a "slender, riotous island which extends itself due east of New York... an old island... that flowered once... a fresh, green breast of the new world". So wrote F. Scott Fitzgerald about Long Island in his famed novel *The Great Gatsby*. Published in 1925, the book painted a gilt and gay image of Long Island as a refuge from the mad bustle of city life, and a lively landscape against which the upper crust of New York's social elite wanted to see and be seen.

But it wasn't just anywhere on Long Island where lawn parties and leisurely weekends of dressing up and tipping were the norm. *The Great Gatsby* was set in Manhasset Bay. The fictional towns of West Egg and East Egg are, in reality, Great Neck and Port Washington respectively. If you look at a map, you'll see that what separates the "Eggs" is Manhasset Bay – a deep-water bay with calm tides that's considered one of the best harbours in Long Island Sound.

Long Island remains the weekend and summer playground of urbanite New Yorkers, and the image of the good life in Fitzgerald's novel persists today. While The Hamptons and Montauk may be the best-known destinations on Long Island, they're also the furthest and

getting to them is a chore that detracts from their pleasures.

Manhasset, by contrast, is one of the first communities one encounters when leaving the big city behind. The ride by train (the Long Island Rail Road) is about 30 minutes from midtown Manhattan, and the drive is about 45 to 50 minutes as long as you're not travelling during rush hour.

There's a reason Manhasset has repeatedly been named one of the best places to live in America. The road to Manhasset Bay winds through neighbourhoods with large, comfortable-looking homes. Today, many of the business and media elite who work in Manhattan come home to Manhasset at night.

It also seems that nowhere is Fitzgerald's version of the upper-class life of leisure held more dear than at Long Island's yacht clubs – and there are many of them. The Manhasset Bay Yacht Club is the grande dame, not only because of her age (she celebrated her centennial in 1991), but also because of her pride of place – she sits overlooking the grand bay that inspired the novel.

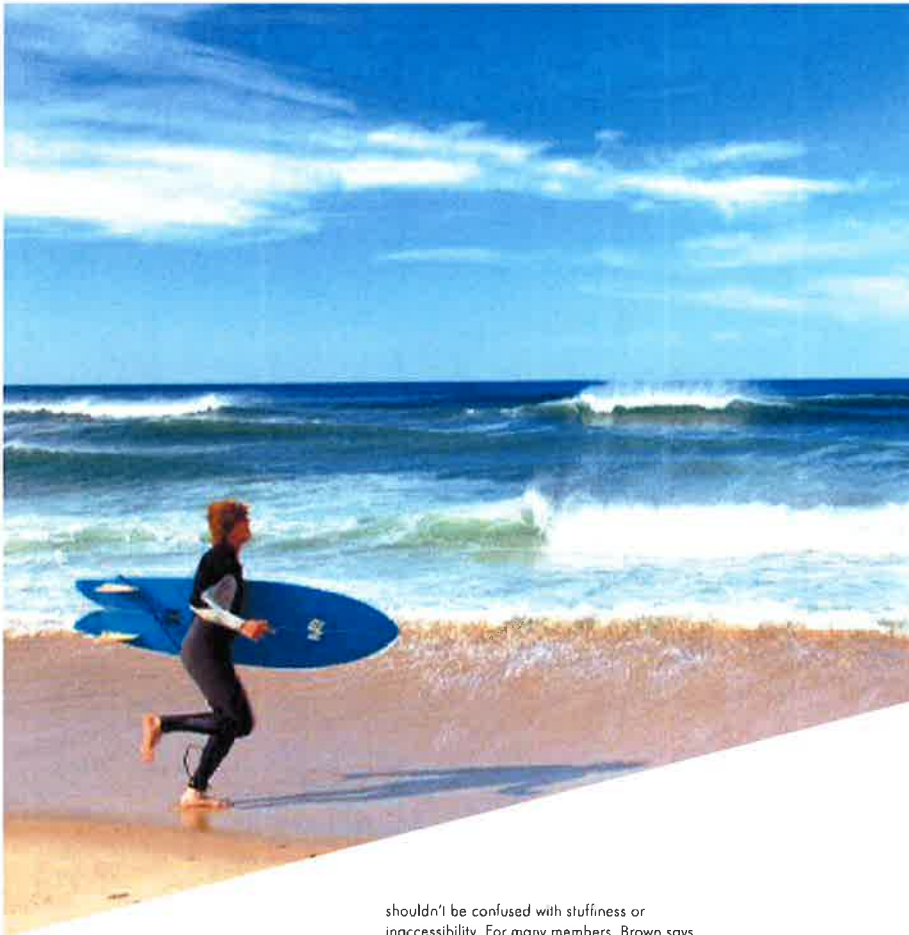
While little from *Gatsby*'s era is visible today, the island's golden period hasn't been completely forgotten at this club, where the values and traditions of that bygone time remain cherished and upheld.

There are the immediately visible, outward

NOWHERE IS NOVELIST F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S VERSION OF THE UPPER-CLASS LIFE OF LEISURE HELD MORE DEAR THAN AT LONG ISLAND'S YACHT CLUBS.



ABOVE, FROM LEFT: Enjoying the sunset on a yacht; the patio-level pool at the Manhasset Bay Yacht Club is popular with young members. FACING PAGE: Spend quality time with loved ones at a family-centred yacht club.



symbols of tradition – the gleaming, polished silver sailing trophy cups and platters in their glass vitrines; the carefully framed burgees presented by other clubs and the gilded pages of the club's centennial history album. Then, there are the more subtle reminders of the club's appreciation for formality: the dress code (jacket and tie at dinner for men); the discreetly placed sign reminding members and their guests that mobile phones are not allowed at the club and the fact that it is not on Facebook or Twitter.

The club's current commodore, Daniel E. Brown, hastens to point out that its formality

shouldn't be confused with stuffiness or inaccessibility. For many members, Brown says, the club is a second home, and the rituals of their personal lives – weddings, business meetings and wakes, for example – are carried out here. He also highlights how family-centred the club is, offering many activities such as junior sailing and tennis for children and teenagers. A patio-level pool at eye level with the bay is also wildly popular with younger members, as is an outdoor grill where they can order lunch and eat with their peers.

As one of the area's oldest yacht clubs and one that's strategically located, the Manhasset Bay Yacht Club has long welcomed visitors from around the world. International guests receive a warm welcome, regardless of whether they



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES / CORBIS / DMITRY FOMENKO / THE LONG ISLAND CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU AND SPORTS COMMISSION

ABOVE, FROM LEFT: Louie's Oyster Bar & Grille is a favourite spot among locals and tourists; the popular Old Westbury Gardens, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is open to the public. **FACING PAGE:** Surfer getting into action on Long Island.

decide to stay on their boat, in one of the club's eight guest rooms or at one of the area's small inns or boutique hotels, such as The Andrew, which is decorated with tasteful oak furniture and raw silk wall treatments.

The yacht clubs aren't the only hubs of social life. Country clubs and golf courses offer plenty of green time. Besides, Manhasset Bay is also well known for its shops and restaurants, many of which are situated along the Miracle Mile. The anchor is the Americana Manhasset – an open-air shopping mall dominated by more than 60 luxury shops, all with highly recognisable names, including Burberry, Cartier, Chanel, Hermes, Prada and Ralph Lauren.

Beyond the bright white lights of the Americana, there's an array of outdoor options in warmer months. Dress down and head to the Town Dock to take a turn through the Port Washington Farmers' Market. It's the only farmers' market in New York state that is certified as completely organic. Don't forget to pick up some locally made gifts, such as honey and beeswax candles, too.

If you're keen to explore more, take a paddle around the bay in a kayak or go on a Great Gatsby Boat Tour of the bay on the Charles II, which does a lazy circuit. From your seat on

the boat, you'll also have a fantastic view of the mansions of Sands Point, so named for the fine sand that was once quarried there. If you're more of a landlubber, visit Belmont Park, a horse-racing track or the popular Old Westbury Gardens – a house and botanical estate listed on the National Register of Historic Places that is open to the public.

Foodies will be pleased to know that Manhasset Bay offers many options to whet your appetite. One of the favourite spots among locals and tourists alike is Louie's Oyster Bar & Grille, which has been in operation since 1905, though it has moved many times. As its name suggests, oysters are the dish of choice here, and they're local and fresh. Clam chowder, local little neck clams and mussels are also must-haves, all served in large portions. A three-course, prix fixe dinner menu is available nightly.

Though seafood understandably features prominently on most Manhasset menus, French and Italian fare are also sought after. Chez Noelle, a classic, intimate bistro, is a popular place to celebrate anniversaries and the like; while Salvatore's holds the undisputed claim to the best pizza in town – their thin, crispy crusts fired in a brick oven.

Though the glory days of Gatsby may be a distant memory, with the kind of lively social scene it recalls in Manhasset Bay, visitors will find the place a worthy tourist destination in its own right. **O**